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SUBJECT: U.S.-Indonesia: Potential Partners on Climate Change
Adaptation

¶1. During an April 6 meeting with Ambassador Hume, Dr. Emil Salim, Indonesia's elder environmental statesman, urged that the United States and Indonesia strive for an agreement on climate change adaptation -- during Obama's potential November visit to Indonesia. This bilateral cooperation could lead to broader consensus on adaptation during the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) negotiations in Copenhagen this December. President Yudhoyono's and President Obama's commitment to the environment offers an opportunity for environmental cooperation bilaterally as well as in the global arena.

¶2. Indonesia, as a tropical and archipelagic country, is especially vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, Salim stressed. Jakarta is therefore concerned that discussions about a long-term global goal and actions on mitigation have dominated UNFCCC talks, while adaptation has been relatively neglected. Dr. Salim, Environmental Advisor to President Yudhoyono, believes that Indonesia and the United States have a shared interest in re-focusing attention on climate change adaptation.

¶3. Adaptation is a key theme of the upcoming World Ocean Conference (WOC) and Coral Triangle Initiative Summit in Manado, Salim pointed out. (He also recalled Secretary Clinton's promise to send a high-level delegation to the WOC). Salim noted that adaptation is intimately connected to tropical disease, food security, and natural disaster management -- issues to which the lens of climate change can bring renewed focus. Scientific research and technology transfer are essential for countries to adapt to climate change. And they are also essential for successful mitigation actions and transitioning to a low-carbon economy.

¶4. Salim emphasized that cooperation on adaptation could be a significant component of the overall science and technology cooperation that the U.S. and Indonesia are seeking to reinvigorate and expand. Cooperation on adaptation is an important part of a comprehensive bilateral S&T Agreement which would greatly expand cooperation in other key areas including health and education. He emphatically agreed with Ambassador Hume that education is the most important component of the new U.S.-Indonesia comprehensive partnership. Science and technology cooperation, and its educational foundation, is a long-term endeavor that requires a strong, long-term partnership between the United States and Indonesia.

HUME